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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5238
INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 4102
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN 0308
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 5242
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3001
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 5227
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0423
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC
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S E C R E T ANKARA 002417

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S/CT ALSO FOR FRANK URBANCIC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/02/2011

TAGS: PTER EFIN KTFN BE TU

SUBJECT: INTENSIFYING COOPERATION WITH BELGIUM AGAINST PKK

REF: A. TD-314/25971-06

1B. STATE 013857
1C. 05 ANKARA 7497
1D. 05 STATE 186669
1E. BERLIN 889
1F. PARIS 1983

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

This is an action request. See paras 4-6.

11. (S/NF) Summary: We should move now to extend the effort to disrupt criminal networks in Europe that support PKK terrorist activity beyond France and Germany to other European countries that host significant PKK support networks. Belgium is a prime candidate. The recent arrest in Switzerland of Remzi Kartal, a senior PKK figure, and his immediate release based on his Belgian travel documents as well as the egregious mishandling of the arrest and escape of the Turkish terrorist who assassinated a Turkish businessman in 1996 and found refuge in Belgium highlights Belgium as a logical next target for a cooperative approach. S/CT Crumpton's planned visit to Brussels at the end of May would be an excellent vehicle to garner high-level Belgian attention to an effort focused on developing leads that would lead to the arrest and extradition of a senior PKK operative.
End Summary.

TIMING RIGHT TO RATCHET UP ANTI-PKK EFFORT WITH BELGIUM

12. (S/NF) Given the positive response by the French and German governments to our initial contacts about cooperative action against PKK criminal activities (refs e and f), the time now is right to extend this approach to other European countries that host PKK activity. The significant level of PKK activity in Belgium suggests that the Belgian government should be the next European government we seek to work with. As in the case of France and Germany, an approach that highlights the organized crime-style activities of PKK supporters and front groups rather than their political activities is most likely to be effective.

¶3. (C) Turkish officials are deeply frustrated with Belgium over its repeated failures to take tangible action against Turkish terrorists based in Belgium. The recent arrest of the prominent Belgium-based PKK figure Remzi Kartal in Switzerland and his subsequent release based on his refugee status in Belgium provides ammunition for the argument that PKK leaders are abusing their status in Belgium to travel freely in Europe in support of terrorist activities. Embarrassment over the mishandling of the arrest of the leftist Turkish terrorist Fehriye Erdal deeply strained relations with Turkey and might also make the Belgian government more willing to fight harder against Turkish-based terrorism. The Turkish MFA believes that last year's demarches to Belgian officials in Brussels and in Washington (refs c and d) had an impact in changing Brussels' attitude to working with Turkey on terrorism issues.

¶4. (S/NF) As with France and Germany, an initial approach should initiate a sustained, cooperative effort to work with Belgian authorities and the Turkish embassy and law enforcement and intelligence agencies to develop information that will lead to the arrest, detention, and ideally extradition of key PKK leaders in Belgium. The process should be initiated after coordination with the Turkish government in Ankara. We request the Department instruct to us to allow post to begin consulting the GOT. Embassy Brussels and the Turkish embassy could then determine the most effective strategy for approaching the Belgian foreign ministry, law enforcement, judicial and intelligence agencies.

NEEDED: A SINGLE CONCRETE EXAMPLE

¶5. (S/NF) As in the case of France and Germany, having a concrete case to work on together should be an effective way to proceed. In addition to Kartal, there are several other leading PKK operatives active in Belgium, including Zubeyir Aydar, Ahmet Bayik, or Muzaffer Kaya. Turkish authorities tell us these and other PKK officials openly travel to and from Belgium and work out of the Kurdistan National Congress' building in Brussels. Belgium is also a significant locus of funds collection for PKK and we understand Roj TV programming is produced there. We recommend that Washington agencies determine which one of these individuals would be most suitable as the subject for an initial approach.

S/CT VISIT IS AN OPPORTUNITY

¶6. (S/NF) S/CT Crumpton's planned May 31-June 1 visit to Brussels could be an ideal opportunity to broach the proposal to Belgian authorities at very senior levels and give impetus to the longer-term, US-Turkish-Belgian effort described above. In addition to citing the specific cases noted above, Crumpton could also note the fact that the PKK is second only to Al-Qaida as a terrorist threat to Europe, according to European governments' own reports.

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<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

WILSON